

REMARKS

The Examiner is thanked for the indication that claims 1-4, 21, and 22 are allowed.

Claims 1-10, 14-17, and 19-25 remain pending in the instant application. Claims 5-10, 14-17, 19, 20, and 22-25 presently stand rejected. Claims 19 and 20 are amended herein. Entry of this amendment and reconsideration of the pending claims are respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 19 and 20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for insufficient antecedent basis for a limitation in the claims. Accordingly, Applicants have amended claims 19 and 20 to provide sufficient antecedent basis.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 5-10, 14-17, and 22-25 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,314,220 B1 to Mossberg et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,701,186 to Huber.

“To establish prima facie obviousness of a claimed invention, all the claim limitations must be taught or suggested by the prior art. All words in a claim must be considered in judging the patentability of that claim against the prior art.” M.P.E.P. § 2143.03.

Independent claim 5 recites, in pertinent part, “the second code is to identify a second station **that is coupled to receive a decoded output signal from the first station.**” Applicants submit that the combination of Mossberg and Huber fails to disclose, teach, or fairly suggest the highlighted element of claim 5.

To be sure, the Examiner stated, Mossberg differs from claims 5, 16, and 23 in that he fails to teach the second station is coupled to receive a decoded output signal from the first station.” *Office Action* mailed January 15, 2004, page 3, section 6. However, the Examiner cites FIGs. 9 and 10 of Huber to teach the second station is coupled to receive a **decoded** output signal from the first station.

In fact, Huber discloses arrangements for realizing a **tuneable optical filter** in FIGs. 9 and 10. As indicated by the arrow within circulator 302, wavelengths are supplied to “an optical fiber 304 having a series of in-fiber Bragg grating elements 306A through 306J.” *Huber*, col. 14, lines 20-24. These Bragg grating elements can be tuned **to reflect a desired wavelength** back towards circulator 302 for output along optical fiber 204F. *Huber*, col 15, lines 5-14. Thus, Huber discloses Bragg gratings to reflect desired wavelengths, but clearly does not teach or suggest a second station coupled to receive a **decoded** output signal from a first station. Reflecting a desired wavelength does not teach or suggest receiving a **decoded** output signal.

Independent claim 8 recites, in pertinent part, “**the second destination to receive the stripped signal from the first destination** after the signal is **stripped of the first downstream address code** by the first destination.” For the reasons discussed above in connection with claim 5, Huber discloses filtering and reflecting wavelengths, but fails to teach or suggest a second destination to receive a signal stripped of an address code from the first destination.

Independent claim 16 recites, in pertinent part, “broadcasting the optical signal to a user station via the first station and the second station; and stripping the first temporal code from the optical signal at the first station.” For the reasons discussed in connection with claim 5 and 8, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 16 is nonobvious over the combination of Mossberg and Huber.

Independent claim 23 recites, in pertinent part, “the first-level code is added by the first station to the second-level code of the output signal” from the second station. Just as the Examiner acknowledged that Mossberg fails to teach or suggest a second station coupled to receive a decoded output signal from a first station, Mossberg similarly fails to teach or suggest the reverse process of adding a first level code by a first station to a second-level code of a signal output by a second station. For the reasons discussed above in connection with claim 5, Huber discloses filtering and reflecting wavelengths, but fails to teach or suggest adding codes to a signal.

Dependent claims 6, 7, 9, 10, 14, 15, 17, 22, 24, and 25 are nonobvious over the prior art of record for at least the same reasons as discussed above in connection with their respective independent claims, in addition to adding further limitations of their



own. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the instant § 103 rejections for claims 6, 7, 9, 10, 14, 15, 17, 22, 24, and 25 be withdrawn.

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CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants believe the applicable rejections have been overcome and all claims remaining in the application are presently in condition for allowance. Accordingly, favorable consideration and a Notice of Allowance are earnestly solicited. The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned representative if the Examiner believes that an interview might be useful for any reason.

CHARGE DEPOSIT ACCOUNT

It is not believed that extensions of time are required beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in documents accompanying this paper. However, if additional extensions of time are necessary to prevent abandonment of this application, then such extensions of time are hereby petitioned under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a). Any fees required therefore are hereby authorized to be charged to Deposit Account No. 02-2666. Please credit any overpayment to the same deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

BLAKELY SOKOLOFF TAYLOR & ZAFMAN LLP

Date:

March 15, 2004

Cory G. Claassen

Reg. No. 50,296

Phone: (206) 292-8600

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Adrian Villarreal

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